

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Audlem St. James' Church of England Primary School

Heathfield Road

Audlem

Cheshire

CW3 0HH

Previous SIAMS grade: Good **Current inspection grade:** Outstanding

Diocese: Chester

Local authority: Cheshire East

Dates of inspection: 4 February 2016

Date of last inspection: 20 October 2010

School's unique reference number: 111267

Headteacher: Rebecca Jewitt

Inspector's name and number: Jane Brooke 658

School context

This increasingly popular village school, with 182 pupils on roll, is smaller than the average sized primary school. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and those eligible for pupil premium is below average. Almost all pupils are of White British Heritage with very few who speak English as an additional language. Since the last inspection there have been a number of staffing changes, including the headteacher.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Audlem St. James as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Highly effective leadership by the headteacher which ensures that Christian values are embedded through the whole school which impacts upon well-being and achievement.
- Very attractive, interactive classroom prayer areas which support rotational class worship so that pupils experience worship with a variety of leaders and in a variety of forms.
- Highly effective monitoring and support by the governors to enable the church school distinctiveness to improve

Areas to improve

- Review worship to include some Anglican liturgy so that pupils can connect worship in school with worship in church
- Ensure that no pupils are withdrawn for intervention so that everyone benefits from the experience of worship and the opportunity for spiritual development

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners

Audlem St James is a warm, welcoming school where all pupils are valued and supported to 'learn, play and pray'. The school is a place of celebration and praise where everyone matters and pupils are encouraged to 'Let your light shine'. The teaching is underpinned by strong Christian values so that progress across both key stages for all pupils is good. The school's concern that every pupil is valued by God is clear from the dedicated work of the outreach worker who has built relationships with parents and helped to improve the attendance rates

which are 96.9%. There are also no exclusions. There is a strong family atmosphere in the school based upon praise for success, Christian forgiveness for mistakes and redemption. Christian compassion, encouraged and modelled by adults, leads pupils to help and support each other in class and in the playground. Pupils go quickly to talk if they see a pupil in the playground sitting on the 'quiet' bench waiting for someone to speak to them. Pupils are given an array of opportunities for spiritual development through RE when using the Philosophy for Children approach, through taking on the Christian Aid Lent Challenge, through worship where the biblical values are connected to their own experience and in lessons when they are challenged to go deeper in their learning, to 'dive for a pearl'. As a way of recognizing children's God given talents, self-esteem and social development are encouraged through celebration of 'WOW' moments, in Friday worship. The Christian family includes everyone and pupils speak excitedly about the superstar awards given by the kitchen staff. A great strength of the school is in the establishment of the Global Ambassadors, the E-safety group, the Anti-Bullying ambassadors, the School Parliament, the Green Team and the Wonderful Worship Leads. By being members of these groups, pupils are empowered to support the Christian distinctiveness of the school, to lead and to make changes. The School Parliament choose a charity and then funds are raised for local, national and worldwide charities, including the Salvation Army and Save the Family. Pupils speak of there being no bullies in the Christian community and of feeling safe. There is exemplary, respectful behaviour in and around school which recognizes the value of other people in God's sight. Pupils engage well with the buddying system which is underpinned by the mission statement that 'everyone matters'. Parents speak of a Reception pupil talking about the whole of Year 6 as her friends. RE raises pupils' awareness of worship in the synagogue in Judaism and the use of henna patterns in Hinduism. Pupils gain a wider understanding of Christianity by visiting the Methodist church and Chester cathedral and have a global understanding of the unbalanced distribution of money in countries across the world. The Global Ambassadors are developing links with Africa and help to promote 'Our World Week'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

An atmosphere of reverence is created in worship as pupils enter the hall quietly to music in an orderly way. Worship is well planned starting with lighting a candle to remember God's presence. Coloured ribbons hanging from a candle stand remind the pupils of the church seasons of the year. A Bible story is told using two pupils from the Wonderful Worship Leads who mime the actions of Saul's conversion to make the story visually accessible. The opportunity for paired discussion allows pupils to engage fully in the story and later, in the silence, they engage prayerfully with the way Jesus changes people's lives. Some of the songs which they sing enthusiastically are also sung in the local church services. Pupils are rightly proud of the school prayer written by all stakeholders and which they all know by heart. Many say their favourite line is, 'Our school is made of hearts not bricks'. The school prayer is at the centre of an attractively painted, large model church archway against the wall in the hall. A few pupils do not participate in worship because they are withdrawn once a week for intensive learning. There are no Anglican responses in worship. A recent survey by the school council and governors indicated that more pupils now enjoy worship and that staff value the opportunity for 'special reflection' time. One boy said that worship makes you warm inside and he feels that everyone is 'part of God's tummy'. Wonderful Worship Leaders develop personally and spiritually as they plan worship every half term and lead the teaching of a Bible story for Early Years. Prayer is a very high priority and central to all activity in the school. A set prayer is said at lunchtime and a prayer from the class prayer book written by the pupils, is chosen at home time. Ribbons of prayers written by pupils are woven into an impressive large latticed wooden cross in the hall. The writer of the prayer can remain anonymous but the ribbon is visible so that the pupil knows the prayer has been noticed. The Lord's Prayer is learnt and said during worship. Prayer boxes or a worry jar are available in every classroom for pupils to post prayers. The importance of prayer is strengthened in the wonderful, visually attractive classroom reflection areas. They are carefully planned around a Christian concept or theme, have a stained glass picture of St James from Chester Cathedral and they are

interactive. The reflection areas are changed half termly and are the centre for rotational worship. One pupil was inspired to create a beautifully coloured dove at home which was then displayed in one reflection area. Worship is led by a variety of people including staff, pupils, leaders from the local church and the Open the Book team. Worship follows school planned themes. The popular 'roundabout' worship, introduced after pupil feedback from a questionnaire, enables pupils to experience worship with different teacher leaders using the prayer reflection area as a focus for worship.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding

The highly effective leadership and personal example of the headteacher have ensured that the Christian values have been made explicit in the school in behaviour and displays. The 'Vision and Values' statement is written and owned by staff, governors, pupils and the local vicar and is embedded in the life of the school. The strap line from Matthew's gospel, 'Let your light shine' is known and understood by parents, governors and pupils and is written on the weekly newsletter. It is lived out in the way staff encourage all pupils to achieve. The achievement of pupils has improved as a result of the Christian values becoming embedded across the school. The new thematic curriculum offers wide opportunities for creativity and experiential learning which encourages spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school planned a theme of farming which is relevant to the locality. The pupils had the opportunity to feed calves, examine and contrast old and new farming machinery and visit a local supermarket. Members of the Governing Body are active and ambitious for the school to succeed in all aspects. They have accessed Diocesan training and established a Christian distinctiveness working party. Governors regularly attend school services and have observed the 'rotation' worship. The visits are recorded and the outcomes shared with the governing body. Governors also undertake learning walks to keep them informed and are thus able to challenge and support the staff on the Christian ethos. After reviewing provision, the pupils and governors were instrumental in improving the classroom reflection areas and will now develop an outside reflection area. The newsletter to parents affirms Christian values and includes prayers for families. The areas for development from the previous inspection have been addressed. The headteacher encourages staff to develop professionally and seek promotion. The recently appointed Deputy Head has participated in the Diocesan Christian Leadership course. The partnership with the local church is exceptionally strong. There are regular services in church, input from the local vicar in assemblies and some nursery and reception pupils participate in 'Praise and Play' held in church. The vicar knows all the pupils and the church is welcoming to all families and invites pupils to services such as Christingle. The pupils wrote and illustrated a book called, 'Who ate my roof' to raise funds for the church roof. The church and school pray for each other. Parents appreciate the visibility of a senior leader in the playground in the morning and the way pupils are encouraged to succeed and behave through positive encouragement. They say they are welcome in school if there is any issue to discuss. The relationship with parents is strengthened through the opportunity to share a school lunch where their child brings them the food and drink. The self-evaluation of the school involves all stakeholders and directs future planned actions.

SIAMS report February 2016 Audlem St James Church of England Voluntary controlled School, Heathfield Road, Audlem, Crewe CW3 0HH